

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Final Office Action mailed October 16, 2007 ("Office Action").

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102

Claims 9, 11-12, 16, 18, and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Nakagawa et al. (US 6,024,774)("Nakagawa").

In addition to the arguments previously presented and hereby incorporated by reference, Applicants present the following arguments.

In Nakagawa, "[t]he raw material gas consisting of carbon monoxide and water vapor, produces a main product gas, hydrogen and a byproduct gas, carbon dioxide." Col. 2, lines 48-50. An object of the Nakagawa invention is to remove the carbon dioxide out of the reaction system. Col. 1, lines 43-49. In contrast, "[t]he present invention utilizes a porous distribution tube to add air for carbon monoxide oxidation." Paragraph 0006. Therefore, while Nakagawa removes carbon dioxide, the present invention adds air.

In conclusion, for the reasons set forth above, claims 9, 11-12, 16, 18, and 22 are not anticipated by Nakagawa. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection – 35 USC § 102

Claims 9, 12, 15, 16, 21, and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Clawson (US 6,641,625)("Clawson").

In addition to the arguments previously presented and hereby incorporated by reference, Applicants present the following arguments.

In Clawson, "[o]ptionally, air inlets (not shown) may be provided to permit reaction air to be diffused within critical areas of the reactor 13." Col. 14, lines 42-44. In contrast, "[t]he present invention utilizes a porous distribution tube to add air for carbon monoxide oxidation throughout the length of a catalyst bed. By

distributing the air injection, hot and cold areas in the catalyst bed can be avoided, thereby improving the selectivity of the reactor to carbon monoxide oxidation." Paragraph 0006. Further, the construction and positioning of the porous tube is discussed in Paragraph 0007. In addition, the porous tube 210 is illustrated in Figure 2. The air inlets (not shown) of Clawson do not distribute air throughout the length of a catalyst bed like the porous tube of the present invention. The porous tube of the present invention will provide a superior distribution of air than the air inlets (not shown) of Clawson. This superior distribution of air will prevent hot spots and will maintain carbon monoxide selectivity.

In conclusion, for the reasons set forth above, claims 9, 12, 15, 16, 21, and 23 are not anticipated by Clawson. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection – 35 USC § 103

Claims 10, 13-15, 17, and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakagawa et al. (US 6,024,774)("Nakagawa"). Dependent claims 10, 13-15, 17, and 19-21 are believed to be in condition for allowance by virtue of their dependence from independent claims 9 and 16. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

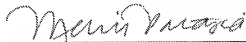
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Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the obviousness rejection. This is believed to be a full and complete response to the outstanding Final Office Action mailed October 16, 2007. The present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

RCE
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Prompt and favorable consideration of the captioned application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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